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Fifty-fifth session

17th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Holkeri (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Solomon Islands, His Excellency the Honourable Danny Philip.

Mr. Philip (Solomon Islands): At the outset, Sir, let me convey the congratulations and best wishes of the Government and people of Solomon Islands on your election as President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Your proven tremendous skills as a consensus-builder and mediator will no doubt guide the Assembly to adopt useful decisions on the many important issues before us. My Government is committed to working closely with you and all Member States during this Millennium Assembly.

Solomon Islands warmly welcomes the admission of our sister nation Tuvalu as a new Member of the United Nations. This is further testimony that the United Nations is indispensable and that its body of international laws is vital to the protection and security of small island developing States. We look forward to working very closely with the delegation of Tuvalu.

The Government of Solomon Islands concurs that conflict prevention should be the cornerstone of collective security in the twenty-first century. We also acknowledge that peace and democratic stability are critical pre-conditions for economic growth and

sustainable development. Moreover, economic and development cooperation have an important role to play in fostering these pre-conditions.

As highlighted in our Millennium Summit statement, the ethnic crisis in our country has challenged national peace, security and stability. It has resulted in the loss of human lives and property, the closure of all key industries in our economy and the displacement of more than 30,000 people. While it may not be comparable to major conflicts in other parts of the world, the net result in human loss and suffering is relative. Therefore, the international community, particularly the United Nations, must give equal attention to every conflict situation. All Member States, both large and small, must be treated fairly.

Challenges to the security and stability of small island developing States like Solomon Islands are, increasingly, beyond their capacity to cope. In such cases, the support of the United Nations and the international community at large is imperative. In the context of our crisis, our smallness and remoteness, limited resources, ethnic and cultural diversity and history are fundamental considerations.

Restoring law and order is the number-one priority for my Government as we strive to resolve our conflict. There is no peace without security. While a peaceful and comprehensive solution has to come from Solomon Islanders themselves, international support to sustain the peace process is necessary. Since we launched our national peace plan, we have made some progress in getting the conflicting parties to the table to

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negotiate and agree to a ceasefire. A ceasefire Agreement was signed by all parties concerned on 3 August 2000 and a National Monitoring Council to oversee its implementation was subsequently formed.

Despite some violations of the Agreement, my Government remains steadfast in our commitment to achieving peace. Further peace talks have since taken place in Honiara, the capital, and a draft framework towards a peace agreement was adopted. A more conclusive peace agreement will be negotiated in Cairns, Australia. Recognizing the importance of civil society participation in conflict resolution, reconciliation and reconstruction, my Government will continue to involve non-governmental organizations, including women's and church groups.

May I express my Government's appreciation to the South Pacific Forum countries for their understanding and support during this challenging time. I wish to mention in particular the recent visit by a Pacific ACP ministerial mission led by the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea to assess the current situation and make recommendations to the joint European Union/African, Caribbean and Pacific (EU/ACP) Commission. We further appreciate the efforts of the Governments of Australia and New Zealand in facilitating our peace process through their logistical support. To sustain long-term peace, Solomon Islands will need the cooperation of its development partners to rebuild the economy and to foster a development path that creates employment, ensures fair distribution of national resources and wealth and accommodates our diverse cultural traditions.

Only the United Nations and other international institutions have the scope and legitimacy to generate the principles, norms and rules that are necessary if globalization is to benefit everyone. The least developed countries (LDCs), including Solomon Islands, need international support to build the capacities to enable us to become more effectively and beneficially integrated into the global economy. The Third United Nations Conference on the LDCs next year will give the international community a unique opportunity to review, assess and adopt policies and measures that could effectively address the development constraints of least developed countries. Developing and sustaining competitiveness and productive capabilities, like all other aspects of development, is a long and often frustrating process. My Government, however, is prepared to work with

our development partners to address these problems in a renewed spirit of solidarity and shared responsibility.

The past decade has witnessed the adoption of several international conventions and programmes of action, from the environment and sustainable development to social development and the advancement of women. Their five-year reviews, despite some progress, have indicated that insufficient resources remains a major obstacle to wider implementation, especially in rural communities in developing countries. New and additional resources are required if we are to make a difference. The United Nations Intergovernmental Conference on Financing for Development next year must produce a practical outcome on how to mobilize financing for development in the new millennium. The twenty-first century should be a century for better implementation of international programmes, a century for action rather than rhetoric.

The economic vulnerability and ecological fragility of small island developing States must be an integral basis for decisions on development cooperation with these States. Such cooperation in my view should continue to focus on better trading opportunities, including market access, capacity-building — in particular, human resources development — and adaptation and mitigation programmes to address climate change and sea level rise.

Investment in renewable energy remains a priority for Solomon Islands. Access to a reliable and cost-effective energy source is imperative if our rural population is to capitalize on the opportunities of the information age.

The international community must mobilize resources to implement the Secretary General's recommendations on bridging the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

Solomon Islands is committed to reform, strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system, including the Security Council, which has primary responsibility under the United Nations Charter for maintaining international peace and security. Greater flexibility and understanding should be demonstrated towards those that are striving to become new permanent members of the Council, including Japan and Germany. A similar attitude should be shown towards the reconfiguration of the United Nations regional groups to reflect present-day realities

and to accommodate those Member States, including Australia and New Zealand, which wish to be placed in their most appropriate regional or geopolitical grouping.

Only an inclusive and universal United Nations can effectively perform its mandate in the twenty-first century. We must show greater understanding towards those who request to participate in the work of our Organization.

May I take this opportunity to reiterate the point made by Solomon Islands during the Millennium Summit relating to the principle of an all-inclusive and universal United Nations. A case in point is that which relates to the reunification of China, which would foster greater stability in world affairs and effectively bolster the activities of the Organization. This new approach by the United Nations for the two Chinas will enhance greater understanding in pragmatic diplomacy and pave the way for efforts currently under way in the Korean peninsula. This is not impossible to achieve, as we saw just before the turn of the century in the reunification of the two Germans.

The challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century are daunting. An effective United Nations demands the steadfast commitment and support of all its Members. The rich and powerful must pay their dues on time, in full and without conditions. Above all, the United Nations needs global political will and resources to maintain peace and security, promote sustainable development, address environmental degradation, combat poverty and disease and foster respect for human dignity.

Human problems will always remain with us, but the way to resolve them should be through dialogue and discussion. This is the approach my Government is taking towards resolving the current ethnic unrest in our country. Attaining peace could be a painful and slow process, it could be fragile and imperfect when achieved, but we believe we can do it. We must, however, go beyond achieving peace. We must provide our people with the values and skills that will sustain peace. As we enter the twenty-first century, let us reaffirm our commitment to work in partnership with others in pursuit of global peace and human security.

The President: I now call on Mr. Ralph Ochan, Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Ochan (Uganda): I should like to offer the apologies of my Minister, who was to have made this statement today. He has had to travel to Winnipeg, where the future of some of our abducted children will be discussed tomorrow.

I bring to you, Mr. President, and all Member States of the United Nations fraternal greetings and best wishes for the new millennium from the Government and people of Uganda. I also bring to you, Sir, and through you to the fifty-fifth session the personal best wishes of the President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

I should like, at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you on your well-deserved and unanimous election to preside over this session of the General Assembly, which follows in the footsteps of the historic and highly successful Millennium Summit. Your predecessor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia, deserves our heartfelt thanks for successfully presiding over so many special and regular sessions during his tenure as President of the General Assembly.

May I also take this opportunity to pay a very special tribute to our illustrious Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the exemplary work he has continued to perform on behalf of the Organization and the peoples of the world. The Secretary-General deserves special recognition by the United Nations family for his tireless efforts to address the numerous challenges that face the United Nations at the dawn of the new era.

Uganda warmly welcomes the admission of Tuvalu as the 189th Member of the United Nations.

For Uganda, events in Africa, and in particular instability in the Great Lakes region, continue to be of the utmost concern. For this reason, I crave the Assembly's indulgence if I devote a portion of my statement to those problems and challenges which confront us in the Great Lakes region.

As the international community is fully aware, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo poses a major threat to the stability of the Great Lakes region and ultimately the entire African continent. That conflict has its origins in the massive violation of human and democratic rights of the people of the region during the long reign of dictators in a number of countries in the region. Evidence shows that when people are oppressed, sooner or later they will rise and

take up arms against their oppressors. This is precisely what we are witnessing in the Great Lakes region.

During the 1980s and 1990s a number of dictatorships were overthrown, in spite of their determined attempts to save their regimes by resorting to the most inhuman methods of clinging to power — namely, resort to genocide. This despicable weapon was not only used in Rwanda in 1994, but has also been used to a lesser extent in Uganda, Burundi and the former Zaire. The instability we are witnessing today is thus caused by the continuing struggle of the peoples of the region to proclaim their human and democratic rights.

In Uganda the people's struggle for fundamental change ended in 1986, resulting in the establishment of democracy, stability and economic progress which the people of Uganda have enjoyed over the past 14 years. Unfortunately, the instability and civil wars in neighbouring countries have continued to impact negatively on our attempt to consolidate the results of our victory. This has especially been the case when remnants of followers of our former dictators have attempted to form alliances with dictatorial regimes in some neighbouring countries to take advantage of the power vacuum there and establish bases from which to launch desperate, but ultimately futile, attacks on Uganda.

As the Government of Uganda has stated before, at various times it cooperated with a number of progressive forces in the region to help the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo free themselves from one of the longest and most oppressive dictatorships in the African continent — I refer to the Mobutu dictatorship. In helping the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we were also hoping to free ourselves from the menace of destabilization, which had become the official policy of the Mobutu regime. That is why in 1997 Uganda found its troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

When a new regime came to power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we signed a protocol of cooperation under which Uganda and Congolese security forces would cooperate to contain the menace caused by the armed groups organized by the remnants of forces of Uganda's former dictators that were operating from Congolese territory. Unfortunately, within a very short period, the new regime in the Democratic Republic of the Congo chose

to turn its back on its former allies and form an alliance with the very people who posed a threat to our security. Not only did this regime turn its back against its external allies, it also turned its back on its internal allies, thus provoking a fresh round of civil war in the country within a year. The result was that a number of African countries that had been allies in the struggle against Mobutu now found themselves sucked into the conflict.

Fortunately, these countries soon saw the folly of armed confrontation and chose to end the conflict through negotiations. The result was the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. This Agreement was a major breakthrough in the attempt to establish genuine peace in the region because it addressed the problems of establishing a democratic and accountable government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and catering for the legitimate security concerns of neighbouring countries. The Agreement still offers the best hope of establishing and maintaining peace in the region. For this reason, Uganda has worked hard to have this Agreement implemented. On 8 April this year, Uganda hosted an important meeting of the Political Committee established under the Agreement. At that meeting, a disengagement plan was adopted under which all the fighting forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would disengage under the supervision of the United Nations Organization Mission (MONUC).

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to effect the disengagement of forces in accordance with the stipulated calendar because one of the signatories, namely, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has done everything possible to block the implementation of this disengagement plan, as well as several other aspects of the Lusaka Agreement. On 14 August this year, an important summit of nine countries in the region plus the leaders of all the rebel groups fighting against the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo took place in Lusaka to identify the obstacles to implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement. Their conclusion was that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was largely to blame for the current impasse. The principal ways in which the Congolese Government has prevented the implementation of the ceasefire are refusal to participate in the national dialogue, rejection of a distinguished and eminent facilitator who was agreed upon as a result of wide consultations and by consensus, restriction of the freedom of movement of

MONUC peace observers, refusal to cooperate with the Joint Military Commission and continued violations of the ceasefire.

The leaders of the region have expressed their strong concern at the obstructions created by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement. If the Democratic Republic of the Congo does not heed the calls of regional leaders, there is a serious risk that the region could become embroiled in another large-scale war. We therefore appeal to the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government to reconsider its position and choose the path of dialogue, with both its internal and external opponents, and to abandon the path of military confrontation.

Uganda wishes to reaffirm its full commitment to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, which offers the best opportunity for bringing this conflict to an end. Uganda pledges its full support for all efforts aimed at ending the conflict and appeals to the international community to give moral and material backing to the Lusaka peace process.

Uganda believes that the problems of Burundi are essentially political and internal. As Chairman of the regional peace initiative on Burundi, President Museveni of Uganda has worked tirelessly in seeking a solution to the problem. In this capacity, he has convened and chaired many regional summits. We believe that a formula that creates democracy with security for all the people of Burundi is possible.

We wish to place on record our appreciation to the facilitator of the Burundi peace process, former President Nelson Mandela, and his predecessor, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, for their untiring efforts in working towards a peaceful solution to the Burundi problem.

Uganda welcomes the agreement signed on 28 August in Arusha by the parties to the Burundi peace process. We regret, however, that a few of the parties did not sign the agreement. Uganda would like to appeal to them to sign the agreement as soon as possible for the sake of the future of the people of Burundi and the Great Lakes region. We call upon the United Nations and the international community to provide the necessary support and resources to enable the agreement to be successfully implemented.

Uganda is committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament endorsed by the United Nations at the first special session on disarmament, way back in 1978. It is against this background that we note with concern the failure of the Disarmament Commission to reach an agreement on the convening of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament. The holding of that conference is critical for addressing important issues related to disarmament. It is a matter of deep regret that the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on an agenda for two years in a row.

Uganda also attaches great importance to the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel land mines. We supported the resolution on illicit trafficking in small arms last year because the proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons remains a major problem in our region. Uganda actively participated in regional initiatives on this matter, which resulted in the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration. We look forward to the international conference on the problem of small arms in all its aspects, scheduled to take place in July 2001.

The world has entered the twenty-first century with globalization as the most pervasive economic force to reckon with. Regrettably, the expected benefits accruing from the process are not guaranteed for all countries. For some, it has opened opportunities for rapid growth and development through increased trade and advances in technology. For others, the process has led to increasing income disparity and marginalization in the global economy. The biggest challenge facing us at the dawn of this century, therefore, is to muster the necessary political will to act together and create an enabling environment for the successful integration of the poorer countries into the global economy. Uganda is of the view that the issue of globalization can and should be seriously addressed multilaterally by the United Nations and by other international organizations. We are confident that with the commitment and goodwill of the major trading nations, the establishment of a rule-based multilateral trading system that has been institutionalized in the World Trade Organization will facilitate the integration of developing countries into the global trading system.

The challenge of ridding the world of the scourge of abject poverty deserves more attention now than ever before because, as more of the world's population is now enjoying better living standards, the situation of many others in the developing countries, especially the

least developed countries, is deteriorating rapidly and dangerously. A larger percentage of the world's population lives on less than a dollar a day today than did a decade ago. The Secretary-General's report reveals that people living in sub-Saharan Africa are almost as poor today as they were 20 years ago. This is an extremely sad commentary on the state of development cooperation. Urgent measures should be undertaken to arrest this deterioration of the living conditions of the people in the developing countries.

In Uganda we believe that significant reductions in poverty can be achieved through sustained and broad-based income growth. We further believe that this can be effectively done through modernization of the agricultural sector, which dominates the economy and employs the majority of our population. That is why in the past two years we have been working to develop a comprehensive set of policies for the modernization of agriculture, as part of the Government's broader strategy for poverty eradication. Uganda welcomes and fully endorses the Secretary-General's recommendations on specific actions that need to be taken both nationally and at the international level to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty.

The past decade has witnessed an unabated deterioration in the socio-economic conditions of the least developed countries. A quick review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s will show that there have been more setbacks than progress. While the least developed countries have undertaken far-reaching and sometimes painful measures of adjustment and reform, the actions by the international community have fallen short of their commitments to provide adequate external support to complement their efforts. As a result, the least developed countries continue to suffer from the lack of supportive external resources for development, owing to a steady decline in the flow of official development assistance.

While it is true that foreign direct investment flows have increased significantly in the past decade, the least developed countries are not yet equipped to attract such investment to a significant extent. High levels of external debt have negatively affected their economies, and despite decades of liberalization most industrialized countries still maintain protectionist measures in their markets, especially for agricultural products and textiles — the two sectors in which

developing countries have a recognized comparative advantage. All these factors have had the combined effect of stunting further the economic and social prospects of the least developed countries.

In this regard, Uganda strongly supports the Secretary-General in urging the industrialized countries to consider granting duty-free and quota-free access to exports from the least developed countries, as a demonstration of their commitment to the integration of the least developed countries into the global trading system. My delegation also urges the General Assembly to adopt the recommendations of the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development contained in the Bangkok Consensus and Plan of Action for least developed countries. We call upon the leading industrialized countries to live up to their commitments in the context of the agreement they reached in 1999 at the Cologne G-8 Summit. We also call for stronger support for relevant United Nations bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to enable effective implementation of their mandates to assist the least developed countries.

With specific reference to the African continent, where 33 of the 48 least developed countries are found, the socio-economic situation is much more precarious despite many efforts by many African countries individually and collectively to lay solid foundations for development. The difficulty in achieving positive results in Africa's development has been further complicated by the severity of Africa's AIDS crisis. We call upon the international community to lend support to Africa's own efforts to realize the objective of the African renaissance, which aims to place the continent at the forefront of human development and progress. The international community should support the efforts of African countries by fulfilling commitments made in the context of the United Nations New Agenda for Development of Africa in the 1990s. These commitments include the reduction of African debt, adequate resource flows, provision of greater market access and assistance in diversification and capacity-building. In this connection, Uganda supports the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report to this session.

I reiterate Uganda's commitment to uphold the values and principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I pledge our

Government's continued adherence to international human rights Conventions and norms.

In pursuit of an international human rights regime, it is imperative that we establish effective institutions and mechanisms for this purpose. Uganda will continue to support and work towards the establishment of a strong International Criminal Court. Of particular concern to us is the deterrence and punishment of the crime of genocide, which remains a continuing threat in our region.

At the national level, in a bid to implement the fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution, Ugandans voted on 29 June 2000 in a referendum for a political system of their choice. I take this opportunity to thank the international community for its support for the success of the referendum exercise. I am happy to report that the referendum was declared free and fair by both local and international observers. This experience convinces us that the referendum proposed for Western Sahara should be conducted as soon as possible. It offers the best alternative to the possibility of continued armed conflict.

In our struggle to end internal conflict, Parliament enacted the Amnesty Act 2000. Under that Act, an Amnesty Commission has now been established and is operational. The mandate of the Commission is to monitor programmes of demobilization, reintegration and resettlement of returnees, coordinate a programme of sensitization of the general public on the amnesty law, consider and promote appropriate reconciliation mechanisms in the affected areas and promote dialogue and reconciliation in the spirit of the Amnesty Act. There is a programme of reintegration into society, which involves acquisition of skills and a fund to promote self-employment. It is our hope that this process will bring to an end internal conflict and all human rights violations associated with conflict situations.

In closing, Uganda believes that as we enter the new century the United Nations should be reformed, equipped and provided with the necessary resources to implement effectively and efficiently the mandates the General Assembly and other principal organs of the Organization have entrusted to it. In this connection, Uganda hopes that the long-drawn-out negotiations on the reform of the Security Council will be finalized at the current session of the General Assembly. We are committed to the position of the Non-Aligned

Movement and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on this matter, and would support Japan and Germany as permanent members of an expanded Security Council, as well as one permanent member each from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable George Odlum, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Saint Lucia.

Mr. Odlum (Saint Lucia): Humanity, our greatest concern, is the reason why we are gathered here today. Humanity stands at a defining moment in world history. The challenge before us is to harness the collective consciousness and will of the international community to address the problems of planet Earth.

During the course of the past century, the disparities between and within nations have widened. Poverty, ill-health, illiteracy and hunger among the world's people have increased. The world's ecosystem, the foundation upon which we all depend for survival, is rapidly deteriorating. That is why we must regard this moment as significant in human history, despite Fukuyama's claim that history has ended. The Third Millennium offers us the opportunity to break away from the shackles of the past and create new beginnings. The choices that we make can change the face of humankind and lead to the accepted goals of global peace, economic and human security and the greater good of humanity.

The past century was replete with examples of nations preening themselves for conquest and domination. The conquistadors who plundered the New World are still at large, using global institutions, new technologies and weapons of destruction to oppress and dominate the weak, the innocent and the dispossessed sectors of mankind. The message that Saint Lucia brings to this Millennium Assembly comes from the pen of Saint Lucia's Nobel Prize Laureate Derek Walcott, who reminds us that, "There are no worlds to conquer/But worlds to re-create".

Minds that are historically poisoned with conquest can hardly experience the essential equanimity and calm of re-creation. The theme of this millennium Assembly reaches out in the direction of re-creation: a people-centred reshaping of the role and function of the United Nations and a purposeful moral thrust in re-creating the battered, demoralized societies in which we live.

That is why we must embrace the United Nations Millennium Summit's theme, "We the peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". The attainment of meaningful transformation in the world system calls for a United Nations capable of assuming a vanguard role in development and in advancing human society and security. The United Nations system must play a critical role in promoting global responsibility. Global responsibility implicitly involves some form of moral commitment to human welfare. It is the formulation of economic programmes designed to bring about economic redistribution, to safeguard against economic crises and to formulate developmental policies that are in keeping with environmental protection and sustainability.

The United Nations should be strengthened to play a more central role in development, ensuring equity and security for its small, vulnerable Members like Saint Lucia against the greed of profit-driven Powers. Instead, we are witnessing a consistent, systemic weakening of the United Nations' role in development, with development issues being left to undemocratic institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which perpetuate global economic inequities and ignore the development issues and concerns of developing countries.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations' primary development agency, is now reoriented to giving advice in governance and democratic elections. The United Nations therefore plays a peripheral role in development, and small States like Saint Lucia are left on their own to be devoured by powerful States backed by powerful transnational corporations.

Saint Lucia joined this Organization and entrusted it with our hopes of peace, security and development. This Organization has passed on our trust to a few dominant Powers and corporations. If the United Nations has a diminished role in ensuring development, peace and security for its small and vulnerable Members, then our presence here is an unnecessary diversion of our scarce resources. In these circumstances we feel threatened and vulnerable that our trust has been betrayed.

The greater good of human security cannot be fostered simply through peacekeeping operations and humanitarian missions. There must be a global drive to

empower people, through the elimination of the adverse conditions that cause the incapacitation of the human spirit and the imprisonment of the imagination. Hence, the United Nations of the twenty-first century must be capable of playing a significant role in liberating the human spirit and imagination through education and real opportunity. It must be able to reposition itself to give practical meaning to the rising tide all over the world as the common man aspires to higher and wider horizons.

In reaffirming our faith in the United Nations and its Charter, it is again with the hope of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The threat to peace does not necessarily emanate from military warfare. There are new forms of war currently being waged on the small, the weak and the vulnerable.

In previous addresses to this Assembly, and in the statement of our Head of Government to the Millennium Summit, we pointed out the injustice perpetrated on Saint Lucia and other banana-producing countries of the Caribbean by the WTO, through its rejection of the marketing regime for bananas in Europe as being WTO-incompatible. That ruling has condemned our countries to the prospect of economic ruin, in that the stabilizing force of our economy has been dealt a mortal blow.

Since that ruling by the WTO, which granted an unreasonably limited time to adjust our economy, we have lost 50 per cent of our foreign exchange earnings, while thousands of farmers have become unemployed and poverty and crime are on the increase. Yet, despite our urgent economic situation, negotiations between the European Union (EU) and the United States have been stalled. Saint Lucia calls on the United States to resume discussions with the European Union on a new marketing system for bananas that could be acceptable to all, giving due consideration to the Caribbean proposal. But that is a pipedream. Our hopes have slipped on a banana skin, because there is a new sweetheart deal between Britain and the United States.

Resilient a people as we are, we are moving to diversify our economies and to build another sector — financial services. Again, the economic giants are determined to crush our development efforts and subject our people to poverty by attacking yet another sector of our narrow economic base.

Saint Lucia has acted in good faith in fulfilling our obligations to the Charter of the United Nations,

assuming equality of all Member States. We have respected the territorial integrity and political independence of other Member States and have never interfered in the internal affairs of another State.

Today, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has chosen to dictate the tax policies of Saint Lucia and other Caribbean islands by labelling our tax regime as a harmful tax haven and is threatening to impose sanctions for non-compliance with its prescribed changes to our tax policies.

It is Saint Lucia's sovereign right to determine its taxes. We cannot tell the OECD countries what taxes to impose, nor do we expect interference in the exercise of the sacred right entrusted to us by our citizens. Our development options are few and limited, and we consider the OECD action a violation of our basic human right to development and to pursue a decent standard of living for our people.

Our peace is threatened, our democracy is being undermined. The conditions for conflict are being created in my country and in the region, and yet, instead of addressing development, we are being asked to strengthen the United Nations to intervene in national crises.

Within the context of a globalized world, the concept of sovereignty is fast becoming an endangered species. No self-respecting nation would willingly abandon its sovereignty for the illusion of a better world, when all the signals from this brave new world are destructive and negative. In respect of peacekeeping interventions, one can surrender sovereignty to avoid a holocaust but certainly not to permit well-heeled rapacious countries to hog the capital flows in the financial services sector.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Last week, through our Heads of State and Government, we reaffirmed our faith in the United Nations and its Charter as indispensable foundations for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. This reaffirmation is of particular significance to small developing States like Saint Lucia, lacking the size and resources to urge the international community to give due consideration to our concerns and interests. We agreed to entrust the United Nations with ensuring equality among States. It is of paramount importance to

us that the United Nations does not flinch in its role of fostering international dialogue and consensus building, so that the concerns and interests of all Member States are adequately addressed and reflected in the work of the Organization. We do not expect our trust to be given to more powerful influences to determine our collective future. We rededicated ourselves to upholding the principle of equality of States and expect that equality to be realized in policy directives of the United Nations with a balance in representation of the interests of Member States and regions.

Saint Lucia calls on the United Nations to assume its rightful, central role in development and the governance of globalization, to promote democracy and good government nationally and internationally, to stand for right and the protection of its weak and vulnerable Members against the powerful and dominant and to seek equality and justice for all. This should be the focus of the United Nations in the new millennium if poverty is to be eradicated and peace enjoyed.

Saint Lucia cannot be enthusiastic about other issues until development and equity in the global economy become a priority. Our decline in revenues denies us the capacity to increase our contribution to peacekeeping, and we will be reluctant to do so until there is an increase in our participation and benefit from the global economy. Man cannot live by governance alone or peace alone. Our people must find the sustenance that will enable them to participate in governance and peace. Saint Lucia therefore eagerly looks forward to the convening of the intergovernmental conference on financing for development to discuss in a holistic manner issues of trade, finance and monetary matters in the context of globalization and trade liberalization.

We have always promoted an integrated approach to development and global issues, and this age of technology and interdependence lends itself more than ever to the integrated approach of assessing and addressing the issues at hand.

We continue to view the financing for development process as the missing and the critical link in the development agenda for a sustainable and lasting resolution to poverty and threats to peace. We hope that through this process the United Nations will reclaim its legitimate role in development, entrusted to

it in the Charter, and promote the effective participation of all its Member States in the governance of the global economy and globalization, for the benefit of all the peoples of the world.

The greatest threat to world peace and democracy is the systemic imbalances and inequities in the global economy and the institutions that govern it. This situation is unsustainable and explosive. The thrust of many statements made during the Millennium Summit and this session has been to strengthen peacekeeping efforts with resources and personnel. We recognize that there is need for improvement in peacekeeping efforts to make them more effective. However, equal emphasis and effort are not being committed to addressing the real threats to peace and the primary causes of war. Developing countries are threatened by continued deprivation and inequities in the global economy. Unless these inequities and imbalances are corrected, we will continue to create situations of unrest and threaten intervention while causes go unaddressed.

Similarly, we parade the fashionable notion of poverty eradication in isolation, ignoring the complex, multi-faceted nature of poverty and the causes of poverty, including global economic inequities. This façade to placate the poorest is fooling some of the people, but not all of the world's poor. The holistic nature of development takes precedence over the palliative of poverty eradication. International cooperation in development should instead be demonstrated through meeting the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product in overseas development assistance, through debt cancellation, special and differential treatment on a contractual basis for developing countries and adequate financial support for the United Nations' development programmes.

We have reaffirmed our commitment to promoting democracy, albeit with the emphasis on democracy at the national level. The inherent problem in achieving this objective is clear, since democracy at the national level is undermined by the lack of a commensurate level of democracy at the international level. The world's peoples and leaders will rightly mock the call for democracy if this principle is not equally applied in the Security Council, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, the main institutions that currently govern world affairs in peace, security and the world economy, respectively. The United Nations must demonstrate leadership of

democracy at the global level if we are to believe in this principle as a foundation for peace and prosperity in the new millennium. All Member States must be able effectively to participate in matters of peace, security and the global economy in order to give real meaning to democracy and governance.

The symbolism of the United Nations is universally recognized, but our role in this millennium is to redefine its goals, sharpen its focus and make it a more efficient instrument for effecting global change and development. But this institutional change must be inspired and fired by the commensurate determination of Member nations to re-create their own societies. The resonance and sympathetic vibration of our visionary Secretary-General Kofi Annan is not enough. We as Member nations must set about the task of societal re-creation, within the parameters of our own societies, to offset the negative influence of moral degradation, crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour. These are the benchmarks of the uncivil society.

In the re-creation of our own societies we face the structural disadvantages of unemployment, illiteracy and the tyranny of consumerism and materialism. Our young people are cannon-fodder for the blandishments of cable television. They lap up a culture and a lifestyle that militate against their own self-development. They fail to understand the nexus between earning and spending and develop an appetite for consumer durables which their economic base could never support. They become aggressively fired-up with demands and rising expectations that neither the resources of the State nor their flimsy work ethic can entertain. They develop a culture of carping criticism that leaves no space for a culture of appreciation. Caribbean Governments look on almost helplessly at a growing phenomenon that threatens to disturb the rhythm of projected economic growth and breeds a kind of lawlessness which conventional law-and-order techniques cannot contain.

As globalization erodes the economic and social bases of our islands, international and bilateral aid dwindles. As ideologies and ideals give way to pragmatism, the weak social and political fabric of these fledgling nations is laid bare. The vocabulary of containment and patience can no longer hold back the anarchist tide of popular revolt. Small nations will encounter their own Seattles, with no National Guardsmen to come to the rescue, no sustaining

philosophies to stem the tide, only the grim statistics of falling revenues and rising expectations.

Nations which attempt to grapple with these social problems have incurred the wrath of large countries, culminating in isolation and the imposition of sanctions. Countries like Cuba and Libya have felt the crush of sanctions. The United Nations system must rethink the strategy of imposing sanctions and must devise other means of ensuring compliance within the international community. The imposition of sanctions is often inhumane and is usually accompanied by devastating economic consequences and fails to produce the desired effect in targeted countries. The international community should realize that interventions, embargoes and sanctions do not a democracy make.

Because of the untold suffering inflicted on civilian populations, a twenty-first century United Nations system cannot continue to endorse the imposition of sanctions. What is even more devastating is that the general will of this Assembly is often flouted and ignored when the international consensus calls for a removal of sanctions. Is democracy merely a convenient attitude? If so, it begs the question as to the insistence that countries like Cuba should conform to the principles of democracy when these principles themselves are being compromised and rejected as a matter of convenience. It is these injustices and violations that have turned world opinion in favour of the embattled Caribbean country Cuba and have made its leader Fidel Castro a living symbol of the unconquerable spirit of our people to triumph over adversity and incredible odds.

More than ever, the positives of a reformed United Nations will become a refuge, a bastion of hope for nations nonplussed by events that seem suddenly out of their control. In my previous address to this time-honoured institution, I alluded to the plight of Africa. I should like to reiterate that as Africa was the last impression of the twentieth century, poetic justice demands that it must be our first preoccupation in the twenty-first century.

In the process of re-creation, Saint Lucia and the Caribbean must strive to become a catalyst for peace in the international forum. We must use our collective influence to contain the border disputes that threaten to create friction in Latin America and the Caribbean. We

must also be wary of importing conflicts into our region.

In the case of Taiwan and China, it is vital that we pursue the line of working towards a one-China policy instead of fuelling the hostilities that characterize the existing relationship between these two countries. An early resolution of the impasse between Taiwan and China will strengthen the solidarity of the developing world.

In the case of Africa, the Caribbean has always enjoyed a peculiarly symbiotic relationship with Africa. Men like Padmore, C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, Sir Arthur Lewis and Walter Rodney have all worked assiduously at the side of African leaders like Nkrumah, Nyerere, Sékou Touré and Léopold Senghor in order to realize the ultimate dream of a united Africa liberated from the bondage of poverty, disease and exploitation. This noble tradition must continue. Once again, Saint Lucia calls on its CARICOM colleagues to pursue the possibility of obtaining observer status at the Organisation of African Unity.

The peoples of the African continent face the onslaught of the AIDS pandemic that threatens to decimate the population of the entire continent. But the devastating effect of AIDS is felt not only on the African continent. Today the world is confronted with the greatest health crisis in human history. The effects of this disease can destabilize fragile democracies and economic progress in both the developing and the developed world.

We welcome President Clinton's efforts to create an African AIDS Trust Fund and the pledge of one billion US dollars to combat AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. We also welcome Cuba's undertaking to send three thousand Cuban doctors to Africa. However, given the transnational nature of the disease, the United Nations should use its institutions to launch a movement aimed at the complete eradication of this scourge. If the world is to survive the ravages of this plague, we must not only pledge financial resources towards research and the development of pharmaceuticals, but we must make those pharmaceuticals affordable and accessible and also continue to sensitize the international community to preventive measures.

At year's end, the General Assembly will witness the end of the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Much remains to be done

before the United Nations is successful in carrying out its statutory mandate to ensure complete and absolute political equality for the peoples of the relevant territories. This must remain the guiding principle of the international community. That the majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories are small islands does not mean that the self-determination of their peoples is less important than for former territories which achieved sovereign status. We must resist all attempts to legitimize the present unequal colonial arrangements, which do not provide for full and absolute political equality. Saint Lucia therefore fully endorses the proclaiming of a second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and calls on Member States and United Nations organizations to fulfil their responsibilities under the Charter and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

On the initiative of the Government of Canada, a debate has started in the forum of the Organization of American States on the subject of global human security. It is comforting for developing States, and especially small developing States, to feel that the conscience of the international world has been pricked into focusing on the security of the entire globe — the entire globe. On a discordant note, the United States of America is now concentrating its attention on a national missile defence system aimed at protecting the United States from missile attacks. At this strategic juncture in the new millennium, when world leaders are gingerly nurturing a culture of peace and disarmament, this action runs counter to the mood for reconciliation and universal nuclear disarmament. This unfortunate and myopic emphasis on the protection of one nation and one people might well trigger a rash of self-protective nuclear explosions, effectively eroding the fragile trust which underpins the hope for global human security.

There are no worlds to conquer, but worlds to recreate. The recreation of the United Nations must be posited on the basis of mutual respect between rich and poor, mutual respect between large and small nations. As small and desperate as our islands appear to be, we should hold fast to the principles that inform the operations of the United Nations.

We challenge the paradigm shift which the developed nations are cleverly manipulating to shunt the focus of the United Nations towards peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. Saint Lucia states clearly and unequivocally that the United Nations focus should

zero in on development as a radical instrument for eradicating poverty and war.

No \$600 million carrot will tempt us to abandon the principle of a nation's capacity to pay. No Congress should determine the scale of assessments for the United Nations, and there should be no conditionality for paying arrears and meeting one's obligations to this Organization.

The hungry sheep look up and are not fed. The wolves run amok and batten on their hunger, and the cycle goes on in its impropriety. This Organization must not flinch in its millennial resolve to end the carnage.

"So I come to you from the weary battlefield of time

Armed with the disappointments of yesterday
The sufferings of today and the dreams of tomorrow

In the struggle I may die

But let's not forsake another tomorrow"

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is His Excellency The Honourable Bonaya Adhi Godana, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Kenya.

Mr. Godana (Kenya): Let me begin by congratulating the President on behalf of my delegation on his unanimous election to lead the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly. I am confident that his able leadership and vast diplomatic experience will steer the business of this session of the General Assembly to the desired outcome. I also wish to express my delegation's gratitude to his predecessor, Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, for the able manner in which he presided over the work of our previous session. I commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose commitment in shaping the United Nations to meet the challenges of the new millennium has won the respect and admiration of many. I particularly commend him for his selfless dedication to duty and encourage him to continue serving the international community with the same zeal.

The proliferation of conflicts in Africa continues to pose serious threats to peace, security and stability. Conflicts have had a negative impact on the continent's development capacity and continue to undermine efforts to improve the living standards of our peoples.

They have caused considerable destruction and loss of lives, generated millions of refugees and displaced persons and exacerbated famine conditions in areas such as the southern Sudan and the Horn of Africa.

Africa recognizes the primary role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. It also recognizes the need for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping and peace-building. Such efforts have yielded positive results in some countries. However, there are others, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the United Nations has been slow to act.

Positive regional initiatives have been recorded in the cessation of armed hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We commend the parties for the maturity they have demonstrated. We urge both parties to the conflict to uphold the ceasefire while working towards a final negotiated settlement of that dispute. The United Nations is urged to speedily discharge its duty along that common border.

The establishment last month of a Transitional National Assembly and the election of the President of the Republic of Somalia was indeed a momentous occasion. I pay tribute to President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti for his mediation efforts and his steadfast commitment to the cause of peace in Somalia. I call upon the international community to continue providing support and humanitarian assistance to the Somali nation. I also hope that the recently concluded accord on Burundi will bring to an end the seven-year-old civil war and enable the people of that country to redirect their efforts towards reconstruction and development.

The recent unfortunate experience in Sierra Leone calls for a review of peacekeeping operations, particularly with regard to the safety, commissioning and deployment of troops. Kenya supports the recent initiative aimed at curbing the trade in illicit diamonds, which fuels and sustains conflicts in Africa. Kenya welcomes the decision by the Security Council authorizing the establishment of an international criminal court to try those responsible for atrocities committed in the civil war in Sierra Leone. It should signal to the rebels there and elsewhere that the international community will not tolerate acts against humanity.

Turning to disarmament and international security, we are disappointed that the Conference on Disarmament for the second year running has not undertaken any substantive work. This situation is particularly disturbing, since the Conference is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The Conference has for a considerable period of time been expected to conduct serious negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and a treaty on nuclear disarmament. This Assembly has in various resolutions urged the Conference on Disarmament to undertake such negotiations. During its fifty-fourth session, for instance, the General Assembly passed four resolutions which, *inter alia*, called on the Conference to get down to serious work.

The lack of progress at the Conference is due to the reluctance of key nuclear-weapon States to submit themselves to negotiate in good faith, despite their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We still expect the nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitment to undertake genuine nuclear disarmament, which they renewed during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty. Failure of the Conference on Disarmament will send the wrong signal to non-nuclear-weapon States and might well encourage those with nuclear ambitions to join that club. After the end of the cold war, there is no longer any justification for maintaining nuclear arsenals, if there ever was one. Kenya calls on the nuclear countries to preserve outer space as a nuclear-free zone.

The serious security problem posed by the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is a matter of grave concern to Kenya. We hosted in March this year the Great Lakes Region and Horn of Africa Conference on the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. The Conference, attended by 10 States of the region, adopted the Nairobi Declaration, which calls for greater cooperation and information-sharing between law enforcement and border control officials of States in our region, as well as the strengthening and/or adoption of national laws and control mechanisms governing civilian possession of arms, and urges source countries to regulate weapons and arms transactions through strict licensing. The Nairobi Conference was an important initiative. Kenya is in the process of organizing a follow-up meeting later this year.

In the same vein, I should like to express our full support for the International Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for 2001. We hope that that Conference will adequately address our concerns.

A consequence of conflicts and the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons has been the massive movement of refugees across borders. Kenya continues to host a large number of such refugees. This has put a heavy strain on our own scarce national resources.

I am happy to note that the Government of Kenya is in the process of finalizing the Refugee Bill 2000 in order to address the refugee phenomenon. The Bill is a result of joint efforts between the Government of Kenya, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other stakeholders. It will provide refugees with a better legal framework in which to live and exercise their rights. Kenya would like to see an end to the disparity in the treatment of refugees globally. We have noted with concern the bewildering inconsistency in the responses to the refugee problems in other parts of the world compared with those in Africa. We hope that in future the international community will respond in a fair and consistent manner to refugee crises in all parts of the world.

The promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is firmly on the international agenda. In Kenya the Government effort is geared towards enhancing public awareness of existing rights and freedoms. In this regard, the Government has prepared a bill seeking to establish an independent human rights commission to monitor and protect human rights. That commission would also advise the Government on its international obligations on the protection and promotion of human rights.

During the last session of the Assembly I commended the High Commissioner for Human Rights for adopting a proactive approach to human rights issues. We continue to stress that human rights should be addressed in a global context through a dialogue-based approach. In this way, we will realize wider acceptance and observance of human rights.

The rise in transnational networks of crime, narcotics, money laundering and terrorism is another matter of grave concern to us. The effects of the August 1998 terrorist bombing in Nairobi are still evident in our economy and in the lives of Kenyans.

We have undertaken measures to contain this menace by establishing special policing units and strict control of movement on border areas and other national entry points. We are also collaborating with international security agencies, such as Interpol, and have signed extradition treaties with a number of States. We call for concerted efforts to adopt effective international measures to eradicate the growing and dangerous links between terrorist groups, drug traffickers and armed criminal groups. The struggle against terrorism can only succeed if there is cooperation between all countries to track down and apprehend wanted terrorists.

Kenya supports the initiative to restructure and revitalize the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. We stress that the promotion of development should remain a central priority of the Organization.

The process of reforming the Economic and Social Council should be expedited by organizing its work throughout the year and reinforcing its role in providing overall policy guidance for operational development programmes and funds.

Kenya supports the implementation of policies that foster economic growth in developing countries in order to bridge the widening gap between rich and poor. My delegation urges the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions to ensure the facilitation of stronger and more equitable international multilateral development cooperation designed to address the growing problems in economic development.

We are all aware of the challenging task of eradicating poverty consistent with the overall objectives and strategies agreed in the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development and with the outcome of the Millennium Summit. Kenya supports and continues to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action. This commitment is manifested in our Government's determination to establish a firm policy and institutional framework for mainstreaming the poverty eradication agenda. The formulation of the National Poverty Eradication Plan is a step towards focusing national policies and operational priorities on the poor, as well as providing an enabling environment for them to participate in economic and social development.

Further, the Government of Kenya has developed an interim poverty reduction strategy paper, which has been prepared in consultation with all stakeholders. The strategy paper outlines measures designed to improve economic performance, while identifying key actions to reduce the prevalence of poverty.

The above measures are part of the Kenya Government's strategy to restore economic growth while maintaining economic stability. Economic reforms are gaining momentum and are expected to lead to a progressive increase in real per capita growth. Currently, the country is facing a severe drought, the worst in our country's history. This is having a debilitating effect on our economy. We appreciate the assistance received so far from the international community and seek continued support to deal with the situation.

Globalization poses enormous challenges to developing countries, and ours is no exception. Kenya welcomes initiatives that protect the weaker States from the adverse effects of globalization. The ability of African countries to participate effectively, exercise their rights and meet their obligations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) is an important determinant in their integration into the international trading system. My delegation is concerned about the growing protectionism manifested in attempts to support a new round of multilateral trade negotiations within the context of the WTO. Kenya is firmly opposed to the introduction of new protectionist barriers to trade camouflaged as labour, health and environmental standards.

At the same time, we urge the implementation of special and differential provisions in respect of developing and least developed countries because of their low levels of industrialization and the vulnerable nature of their economies.

The increased globalization of financial markets and capital flows poses new challenges for the mobilization of adequate resources. Kenya shares the concerns of developing countries over the general decline in official development assistance and the free flow of foreign direct investment to developing countries. Portfolio investment, which tends to be volatile and unpredictable, as experienced during the 1997 financial crisis, is a source of financial instability. We support the creation of a new international financial architecture for a more stable financial system. The

global market environment poses enormous challenges, and there is an urgent need for supportive international policies that will ensure the financial system's efficient functioning.

The slow progress in Africa's attainment of sustainable economic growth is linked to the failure to mobilize resources. This has been aggravated by internal conflicts and the prevalence of diseases such as malaria and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which in themselves have a causal relationship with poverty and deprivation. My country, in collaboration with international agencies, is zealously pursuing scientific research to find a cure for malaria and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We call upon the international community to support our research efforts to find a cure for these diseases, which continue to ravage millions. Kenya wishes to stress the need to ensure the easy availability of existing drugs to those already afflicted.

Given that information technologies are important prerequisites for development, the developed countries should direct resources to accelerate the development of information technology in Africa. In this regard, Kenya welcomes the Okinawa Charter initiative of the G-8 countries and looks forward to the implementation of its aims.

My delegation notes the commitment made by the G-8 to speed up the pace of implementation of the enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, in line with the targets agreed at the Cologne Summit. However, the initiative suffers from a lack of commitment to implementation and should be reviewed with a view to being speeded up. We share the concerns, expressed by the leaders from developing countries who attended the Okinawa G-8 Summit, on the impact of the debt burden to poverty alleviation efforts. Debt repayment in sub-Saharan Africa is to the detriment of health, education and other essential services. Kenya urges creditor countries to honour pledges for debt relief and increase balance of payment support to developing countries.

Kenya attaches special importance to South-South cooperation. It is in recognition of the important role of economic cooperation among developing countries that we continue actively to pursue economic integration with countries in our own subregion. The relationship between regional and subregional economic groupings is seen within the framework of

the African Economic Community, which Kenya fully supports.

The institutions established in 1945 are overdue for an overhaul. The world political, economic and security landscape has changed, and so must these institutions. The United Nations must become a truly universal Organization, democratic and representative of the many diverse interests. Its organs should reflect this rich diversity, with effective representation and participation at all levels of decision-making. The General Assembly has to reassert its role within the Organization. The Security Council must also reflect the principle of equitable geographical representation and the realities of our times. Kenya seeks to have permanent seats on the Security Council allotted for Africa, to be filled by African countries on a rotational basis and on the same footing as existing permanent seats. The transformation of institutions dealing with other issues is equally overdue if we are to re-energize the efficacy and effectiveness of the United Nations, as called for in the Millennium Declaration.

Kenya appreciates the increased utilization of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. We are nevertheless dissatisfied with the level of involvement with environment and human settlement issues. There is a huge, under-utilized capacity in the Nairobi offices. It should be noted also that the Nairobi Declaration adopted by Member States in February 1997 declared the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to be the principal body in the field of environment. Kenya is therefore totally opposed to the creation of new institutions with similar concerns and calls upon the international community to strengthen the role of UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in Nairobi.

In conclusion, Kenya fully embraces the spirit of the Millennium Declaration, with a pledge to make its modest contribution in the general service of a happier family of nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is Her Excellency Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner (Austria): First of all, let me say how satisfied I am about this week's decision of our 14 European Union (EU) partners to lift the measures implemented on 31 January against Austria. This is a victory for reason, and it is also a victory for

Europe. In the last seven and a half months — a very difficult time, I must say — the United Nations has stood by us. Austria treasures this support. The United Nations has had confidence in our firm commitment to universal standards and values. The report of the "three wise men", Martti Ahtisaari, Marcelino Oreja and Jochen Frowein, comes to the same conclusion. Austria will continue its role as an active, reliable and constructive Member State of the United Nations.

Austria expects to resume fully its formal and informal work within the European Union. This is absolutely crucial in view of the important projects that lie ahead of us: first, the reform of the institutions of the European Union and, secondly, the enlargement of the Union, a matter of great importance and a historic responsibility. An enlarged Union will bolster European stability and prosperity. Its benefits will reach beyond Europe. Austria, as a country in the heart of Europe, will fully support and, in its own interest, accelerate the process of enlargement.

Since this fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly coincides with the turn of the millennium, we ought to undertake a broader examination of today's world. We ought to design policies of a long-term nature. All too often we have to cope with contradictions when engaging in day-to-day politics and when rapidly responding to crises on the one hand and addressing sustainable societal development on the other. A great number of our decisions taken today have important implications for future policy options. Generations to come will have to bear the cost, and they will enjoy the benefits of our policies.

It is in this context that I wish to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his clairvoyance and leadership. His millennium report embraces a balanced analysis of the challenges the international community faces today, and it offers concrete, accomplishable and far-sighted recommendations. Austria welcomes this road map for the future course of United Nations activities and will follow its guidelines.

Furthermore, Austria supports the timely initiative of the Secretary-General to mandate a comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. Since the environment for complex peace operations has become more challenging than ever before, Austria, as a major troop contributor, welcomes the report and the recommendations drawn

up by a group of experts under the leadership of Mr. Brahimi. We are ready to support their implementation.

As Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), I wish to outline a number of major achievements of the OSCE during this year. The OSCE serves as the primary forum for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in my region. This year we are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. This truly historic document initiated the Helsinki Process, from which we still draw valid lessons for our common efforts to achieve "freedom from fear", to use this vivid notion from the report of the Secretary-General (*A/54/2000, para. 65*). Security and stability through cooperation and the effective protection of human rights within each country have a direct bearing on international peace and security. The fundamental significance of democracy, human rights and strong civil societies has been affirmed in the Charter on European Security adopted by the OSCE participating States last year in Istanbul.

The OSCE has proved to be a flexible institution, adapting itself to the far-reaching changes in the political landscape of Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Over the past decade, it has evolved into a vibrant organization with a network of as many as 20 field operations.

Not only in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia, on which I will elaborate later, but also in other parts of the OSCE area, we have been able to achieve concrete results in our continuing efforts for peace and stability. As to conflict prevention, I would like to mention the successful observation mission of the OSCE at the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. We can also register some positive developments concerning the political resolution of "frozen conflicts" in Georgia and in Moldova — conflicts which are often outside the spotlight of broader public attention but nevertheless have a highly destabilizing impact on the region and beyond. Through my frequent travels as Chairperson-in-Office, I wish to enhance the political awareness regarding these unresolved or potential conflicts and security risks. The conflict situation in Chechnya remains unresolved and a matter of great concern.

Let me mention an achievement in the institutional field. An important step in enhancing the civilian crisis management capability of the OSCE was set with the establishment of the Rapid Expert Assistance and Cooperation Teams (REACT), a programme which should speed up the deployment of highly trained civilian experts to the field.

What are the specific challenges the OSCE is currently facing in the prevention, settlement and management of conflicts? In South-Eastern Europe the work of the Organization focuses in particular on the strengthening of democracy, post-crisis rehabilitation, the rule of law and civil society. The promotion of free and fair elections plays a key role in achieving these goals. The OSCE is tasked with organizing local elections in Kosovo at the end of October this year and, only two weeks thereafter, of general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Kosovo, the OSCE has been involved in the complex task of civil and voter registration, which resulted in more than 1 million registrations. I note with regret that the Kosovo Serbs did not participate in the registration process and that Belgrade would not allow the registration of Kosovo Serbs in Serbia. The OSCE, however, will continue its efforts to bring about active participation of the Kosovo Serbs in democratic political life. We will not lose sight of our common goal of a pluri-ethnic Kosovo.

Kosovo is an excellent example of the new quality of the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE as a distinct component within the overall framework of the United Nations Interim Administration.

A central goal of Austria's chairmanship of the OSCE is to give equal attention to current, and often long-standing, conflicts as well as to potential security risks. In the pursuit of this policy, we support the explicit goal of the OSCE to create a common security space. This implies a strong focus on the Caucasus region and on Central Asia. The OSCE effectively contributes to the alleviation of the suffering of the civilian population in this region, the promotion of political dialogue between warring parties and the monitoring of post-conflict arrangements through observer missions.

Conflict prevention is key to the work of the OSCE in Central Asia. During my most recent visit to the region, I obtained a first-hand impression of its

security problems. In addition to the destabilizing effects of the precarious situation in Afghanistan, the Central Asian region faces manifold transnational threats, such as terrorism, organized crime, illegal arms and drug trafficking and the degradation of the environment, as well as violent extremism and religious fundamentalism.

The OSCE is well placed to support the Central Asian States in their common efforts to deal effectively with these multiple challenges to their security. It acts as a political catalyst supporting the efforts of other, specialized international actors. The international conference, jointly prepared by the OSCE Chairmanship and the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, on the issues of drugs, organized crime and terrorism, to be held in Tashkent on 19 and 20 October is only one example.

I cannot but re-emphasize the importance of the human dimension in the work of the OSCE. In the course of this year we have focused our work on a number of abhorrent facets of civil unrest, such as children in armed conflict, the proliferation of small arms and the trafficking in human beings, particularly women and girls. It is in this context that I would like to highlight the recent adoption of a comprehensive Action Plan for Gender Issues, which will guide the OSCE in its commitment to advance equality between women and men and to protect the human rights of women and girls in the region.

If we analyse the profound changes that have occurred in the recent past, we note that the individual citizen has gained in prominence not only as an actor in our democratic societies, with growing responsibilities in relation to the social, environmental and economic sustainability of our development, but as a victim of new threats to security.

It is noteworthy that the United Nations, the Group of Eight and the OSCE have increasingly moved action against terrorism, drug abuse and crime to the top of their agendas. I am pleased to point out that the negotiations on a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which were held at United Nations Headquarters in Vienna over the past two years, led to a successful outcome in the course of this summer. We are confident that the three additional protocols — on trafficking in and smuggling of persons as well as on trafficking in firearms — will be concluded this fall. Austria, in any case, will strive for a rapid entry into

force and implementation of these important legal instruments. We are pleased that the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention will serve as the secretariat for the Conference of the Parties. I stress that my country is ready to join forces with our partners in the developing world to counter organized crime in all its facets.

Thanks to the human development reports of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), our understanding of development has shifted from macro-economic statistics to a more human-centred concept, defining development as a process of broadening the spectrum of choice, both of the individual human being and of society at large. I am pleased that the *Human Development Report 2000* underlines the interrelatedness between human development and human rights. In short, the Report concludes that human development is an essential precondition for the realization of human rights. Human rights, in turn, are an essential prerequisite for comprehensive human development.

If, however, we accept that most challenges to human security have a human rights dimension, we may wish to take a new and more operational look at the promotion and protection of human rights. How can we make our human rights regimes more effective in our societies? The Secretary-General has shown us the path to follow, saying:

“it is the poison of ignorance, all too frequently, that lies at the heart of human rights violations, knowledge provides an antidote”. (Press release SG/SM/6829, 10 December 1998)

Ultimately, it will be citizens themselves who, through better knowledge, become the owners of their human rights.

It is in this context that I would like to point out the initiative taken by all women Ministers for Foreign Affairs present at the opening of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We jointly launched an appeal to our fellow leaders in order to energize our common fight against the global scourge of HIV/AIDS, a scourge which increasingly affects women and girls. Our efforts to counter the HIV/AIDS pandemic must be multifaceted. They must encompass access to adequate medical care, drugs and social protection; they must encompass information and services available to girls and women to help them understand their sexual and reproductive rights in order to protect themselves from

unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. This should be combined with the education of young men to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of health, sexuality and reproduction.

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, spanning the period 1995-2005, was unanimously adopted by this Assembly at its forty-ninth session. We have reached its mid-term and might therefore wish to give it new momentum. We clearly came to understand that human rights education and learning serve as strategies for development on the one hand and as preventive tools for human security on the other.

Following an initiative taken by Austria in the framework of the "Human Security Network" of Foreign Ministers, an International Workshop on Human Security and Human Rights Education was convened in Graz, Austria, early this year. Experts from all continents called for human rights education and learning as a common endeavour of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions. They concluded that human rights education should go beyond formal education so as to encompass all forms of learning and different modes of socialization. Innovative human rights education must be participatory and operational, creative and empowering. It must address all levels of society. All citizens, in particular all persons in positions of leadership, must regard human rights standards as a yardstick when making decisions.

In this context, I applaud the initiatives taken in Africa, South Asia, Latin America and Europe to have municipalities proclaim themselves "Human Rights Cities". I am pleased to announce from this rostrum that the city of Graz will be the first "Human Rights City" in Europe.

While we affirm the universality of our human rights, human rights education and learning will have to be rooted in the rich cultural plurality of the world. In the diversity of learning processes we will better comprehend the common humanity we all share.

Why, it will be asked, do I raise the issue of human rights education and learning at the General Assembly of the United Nations? It is because I am convinced that in this strategic triangle with human security and human development, human rights are of

profoundly political significance for the direction we take in our development.

As the acquisition of any political culture takes time, our efforts must be long-term and comprehensive. At the same time, there is a sense of urgency. This is why I appeal to the Assembly to give our efforts in this area a new momentum and new energy and direction. Lately civil society has pleaded for more political leadership in this field. We should be ready to respond and to develop new structures of partnership with civil society and with the institutions already active in the field at national, regional and international levels.

The global house of human rights must be built every day. It must be built by everyone and it must be owned by everyone. Only then will it be a house of prosperity, a house of freedom and a house of peace.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Ural Latypov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus.

Mr. Latypov (Belarus): Let me first welcome Tuvalu as a new Member of the United Nations.

The current session of the General Assembly is an important landmark for the international community. We are still feeling the beat of the Millennium Summit. Our crucial task now is to seek specific ways to implement the provisions of its final Declaration.

In his address to the Summit, President Alyaksandr Lukashenka of Belarus clearly defined an ultimate objective, as we see it, for shaping the image of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, which is to meet the needs and aspirations of our respective nations and seek practical opportunities for real improvement of the quality of life of every single individual. This is the imperative that reality has been dictating to us. It is also the main thrust of the Secretary-General's report (A/54/2000) "We, the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century".

Belarus holds in high respect the unique historic role played by the United Nations in international developments of the second half of the twentieth century. As can be seen from all the Organization's previous experience, a stable, just and prosperous world can only be attained on the basis of the sovereign equality of States, their territorial integrity and political independence, non-interference in their internal affairs

and respect for national traditions. Humanity has had to confront conflict and humanitarian stress every time those principles were disregarded. We believe that they will continue to be of similar importance in the next century.

Just as was the case 55 years ago, there is hardly a more pressing task for the United Nations than the maintenance of international peace. All Member States have equal rights to peaceful and sustainable development. Thus the security of no State, whether small island country or super-Power, can be achieved through disrespect for the interests of others.

The Republic of Belarus is committed to its choice of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe in the generosity and great meaning of the initiative by the head of our State to establish a nuclear-weapon-free space in Central and Eastern Europe. We are confident that in due time this idea will receive a sufficient number of proponents.

During this session Belarus has deposited its instruments for ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the additional Protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons. At the same time, a continuing absence of visible consensus within the United Nations on the key issues of the international disarmament process is becoming a dismaying reality. To exit this dead end would essentially require setting priorities and embarking upon an active dialogue aimed at achieving progress in both nuclear and conventional disarmament. Five million victims over the past decade — is this not serious enough to make real action imperative?

It is crucial to maintain and consolidate the strategic global parity built under the complex conditions of the twentieth century. In this regard, preservation of and respect for the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is a logical basis for the maintenance of international stability. Its violation could result in an extremely dangerous disruption of the established set of interdependent agreements in this area. The Republic of Belarus will again sponsor the resolution on the ABM Treaty during this session.

The time-span between the two most recent sessions of the General Assembly has been marked by the United Nations active involvement in the peaceful settlement of disputes, post-conflict peace-building and rehabilitation. We observe with satisfaction the actions

taken by the Security Council, more resolutely and consistently than in the past, with respect to such complex situations as conflicts in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Angola and East Timor. My country has been following with hope the developments in the Middle East. We believe that the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Southern Lebanon and the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks will favour the resolution of the crisis in the region.

For over a quarter of a century attempts have been made to break a stalemate in the settlement of the Cyprus problem. It is crucial that the United Nations continue its work to resolve this crisis on the basis of the appropriate resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The development of specific preventive measures for the elimination of root causes of potential conflicts should be the focus of United Nations attention in the near future. It is important to make irreversible the growing trend in international efforts to define universal mechanisms and specify practical measures of conflict prevention and crisis management. The activities of the Panel of experts headed by Ambassador Brahimi, in addition to the upcoming Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, are an important contribution thereto.

As the Secretary-General has rightly observed, the very credibility of the Organization as regards playing a decisive role in the war and peace process is at stake. In this respect, the Republic of Belarus has been and remains firmly committed to the preservation of the primary role played by the Security Council in decision-making on actions to avert threats to peace and security. Viewed from that perspective, further improvement in the working methods of the Council and reform of its membership on the basis of equitable geographic representation are not merely an important task, but a pressing imperative.

Belarus reconfirms its determination to constructively contribute to the activities of the Council should my country be elected as a non-permanent member for the period 2002-2003.

The tremendous benefits of globalization will be reduced to nothing unless there is a clear understanding of the dire need for the international community to learn a common language — that is, the language of

law. In recent years we have witnessed practical demonstrations of situations in which even the slightest deviation from internationally accepted norms would inevitably present an extreme danger not only for the violators themselves, but also for the entire international community. It is an encouraging fact that since its outset the United Nations has gained significant potential by accumulating all the far-reaching ideas, hopes and aspirations of humankind for building a better world.

Implementing the norms of international law at the national level should become a priority for the United Nations and its partners. Today my country is a party to the United Nations most important conventions and treaties. The establishment of a legislative model based on the United Nations Charter and international treaties and conventions, complemented by national legislation, is the objective we must all strive for.

The stability of the interdependent world is hardly attainable when the system of international politics is perceived solely as the domination of one State or interaction among separate groups of States. Differences in social and economic advancement will persist for a long time. Therefore, in a globalizing world the United Nations should play a more active role in promoting the economic development and social progress of all countries.

Belarus supports a sharper focus in international efforts on the problems of the developing countries, particularly in Africa. We also deem it expedient to take into account the needs of countries with economies in transition, which would by no means soften the focus on the problems of the developing world. We see no contradiction in such an interlinkage, as appropriate goals and objectives to this end could only be formulated jointly with the United Nations.

The Republic of Belarus shares the apprehensions expressed by many States over the environmental future of our planet. In this regard, we perceive as highly indicative the debates at the Millennium Summit and at the Summit meeting of the Security Council. Belarus has signed and ratified a number of important international agreements in the area of environmental protection, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Against this background, we continue to be acutely sensitive to the ever-diminishing interest by the

international community in the Chernobyl disaster, the world's largest technological catastrophe of the past century, to which Belarus fell a major victim. In this regard, I should like to quote once more from the address by the President of our country at the Millennium Summit:

"Without awareness of our joint responsibility for preserving the common human environment, all discussions of a fair distribution of the benefits and disadvantages of globalization will remain just shallow talk." (A/55/PV.4)

We are confident that the United Nations, which has so far contributed significantly to assisting our people in the relevant area, will be in a position to find new sources and mechanisms to help Belarus overcome the Chernobyl tragedy.

The ideas of democracy and respect for human rights can certainly play a key role in continuous human development in the twenty-first century. Yet to make this goal attainable, it is essential to relinquish attempts to use those principles to discriminate among peoples and "punish" unwelcome States and Governments. Regrettably, we must note a certain involvement by the United Nations in efforts to establish a "club of countries of advanced democracy" on the basis of some random criteria. It is inadmissible that the idea of the forum of new and restored democracies approved within our Organization should lead to the separation of peoples into teachers and pupils.

The principle standpoint of Belarus on this issue is the following: a truly democratic world can only be based on an equal dialogue among different civilizations.

This year is of special significance to the development of democracy in my country. Parliamentary elections due in October will be held in full conformity with democratic standards. We have invited international observers to monitor the elections and look forward to seeing them carried out and contributing in real terms to democratic development in Belarus.

Each session of the United Nations General Assembly is a milestone in the evolution of the United Nations itself and the development of the system of international politics as a whole. In that sense, the current session has been endowed with very special

powers. It is up to us all to determine how much the United Nations will be able to show that the hopes and aspirations of our nations at the dawn of the new century were justified. In the discharge of these noble duties, the international community can invariably count on a due contribution by the Republic of Belarus.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Juan Esteban Aguirre Martínez, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Paraguay.

Mr. Aguirre Martínez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I begin, I should like to make a personal comment. As a former official of the United Nations Population Fund, I should like to express my great pride and personal satisfaction at being able to speak to the Assembly today and to address those countries with which I have worked, together with my other colleagues in the United Nations. All of us, of course, share a hope that our dream of a better world will come true.

It is a great source of satisfaction to see the President preside over the work of this Assembly, familiar as I am with his great personal and professional skills, which guarantee the success of our work. I should also like to express to his predecessor, Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab, our gratitude and recognition of the efficient work he has done. Similarly, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the detailed report on the work of the Organization that he has presented. It describes the important work carried out by the United Nations over the past year as well as the challenges for the future.

I should also like to express on behalf of my Government our pleasure at the entry of Tuvalu as a new Member of our Organization. This is an important step forward along the road of universality, which is the aspiration we all share.

The recently concluded Millennium Summit was a useful instrument for reflection by our Heads of State upon the present and future of the Organization. This Organization must adapt its structures and mechanisms for action to the new challenges facing humanity. I am certain that the numerous suggestions that have been made will help establish clear lines of action so the United Nations can operate more efficiently and effectively.

At the last summit of the Rio Group, which took place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, the Heads of State who comprise this political consultation mechanism endorsed the Cartagena Declaration as our singular contribution to the Millennium Summit and to the future of the United Nations. It is our intention to ensure appropriate follow-up to the initiatives and aspirations expressed in this document in order to make certain that they become a reality in the future for the benefit of all humanity in terms of democracy, trade flows, better dynamics in international relations in terms of human security and the pursuit of multilateral solutions.

I fully agree with the Secretary-General of our Organization when he says that the conclusion of one century and the turn of the millennium provide us with a unique vantage point for reflecting upon our common destiny. Fifty-five years have passed since the creation of the United Nations, and during that period we have seen many auspicious as well as many worrying events. Let us pause for a moment and think about all the good that we have done and the good that we have failed to do, as well as upon what we have done wrong or should not have done.

The conclusion of the cold war, of which this Organization was one of the most important theatres, seemed to herald a period of peace and prosperity for humanity, in fulfilment of the Biblical mandate to beat our swords into plowshares. Nevertheless, humanity is still facing terrible threats, not only to its security — because war and violence persist in new and more sophisticated forms — but also threats to its very existence, in light of the prospect that our planet may become uninhabitable as a result of human activities.

Consequently, in the new millennium the United Nations will be equally if not more important than it was in the previous millennium. Our Organization must of course adapt to new times. The reform of our Organization cannot be postponed any further. The structures of its main organs must adapt to the new characteristics of the international community, with the increasing number of nations which belong to it. We must adapt to the increasing role of civil society, the spread of the system of representative democracy, the globalization of our world markets and the intolerable persistence of serious social deficits in most of our States.

In particular, our Organization must adapt so that our efforts towards development are rendered appropriate for each individual wherever he or she may live and wherever his or her community may be located, and wherever we want to see our families grow.

The human being as the centre of development will continue to be at the centre of our mandate, as well as the commitments assumed by each and every one of our countries at summits of the United Nations over the past decade. The efforts made by each man, woman or child to take advantage of the opportunities offered by global markets and new economic trends is first and foremost a local and community effort and secondly a national effort, which can create opportunities for growth and ensure participation for each man and each woman.

The reorganization of the United Nations, and in particular its system of development, must ensure that it can respond creatively and flexibly to these community and national efforts. This will make it possible progressively to improve for each individual daily access to health, education, sanitation services, technology and reasonable credit, as well as the equitable participation of women in productive activities. In that way, we can ensure the integration of all our citizens into the global market and make certain they can benefit from this process.

It is vital that the cooperation activities of the United Nations be well structured and have a real impact on our populations, in particular women, children and adolescents. It is essential that these activities create an environment of national dialogue in each of our countries with a view to harmonizing views on development and creating consensus on the means for achieving growth, in order to give true meaning to social and productive investments and to meet the qualitative demands of civil society.

National consensus must necessarily be the basis for global consensus, and today more than ever it must be the basis for consensus among integrated groups that wish to negotiate with each other. However, a reorganized and renewed United Nations, in the ultimate analysis, must be the guarantor of the well-being of each of our citizens. The United Nations exists so that all of our citizens can benefit from new trends in trade, development and technology in order to achieve growth as individuals and as families and to

improve their quality of life and feel that they live in a better world where their sons and daughters will be able to continue to grow, in peace.

Turning to another subject, we are concerned about the delay in the adoption of a decision about the future composition of the Security Council, because we feel that its enlargement cannot be postponed. Its composition must become more equitable and representative and allow for a better political balance. This gradual process of democratization must begin with an increase in both categories of members, permanent and non-permanent, and it should also include both developed and developing countries. Special attention should be given to the fact that the developing countries are now under-represented in that very important body. Paraguay also believes that this reform should include the gradual elimination of the veto rights of the permanent members.

We welcome the Brahimi report, which establishes a valid framework for the reform and strengthening of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Paraguay has always supported such operations as a fundamental mechanism contributing to world peace and security.

I should also like to refer to the regular budget of the Organization, in connection with the aspirations of some developed countries to reduce their contributions to a lower percentage. We believe that this should not mean that the assessed contributions of developing countries would increase to unprecedented percentages, even though the figures involved may seem to others modest or insignificant. It is paradoxical that some developed countries would have their contributions reduced precisely when they are enjoying excellent economic growth, while other countries that are experiencing difficulties would see an increase in their contributions.

It is in this context that we must seriously study the scale of assessments so that when we adopt it this year we will achieve a fair and equitable distribution of the financial burden of this Organization. We hope that together we will find balanced solutions and equitable formulas and timetables for redistributing the budgetary burden so that we can promote and reactivate the participation of large and small States in our Organization.

International relations have acquired a new dimension as a result of the revolution in computer

technology, telecommunications and communications in general. The effect of this is what we call globalization, which has both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand it has produced a change in the consciousness of human beings, who for the first time feel they are part of a whole — that is, of humanity in its entirety. On the other hand, it has increased the divide between the poorest countries and the more advanced countries owing to the advantages accruing to those that are better prepared for the dismantling of national barriers. In these conditions, solidarity takes on a new urgency. It is an act of justice for those peoples who see all their potential progress subordinated to this process.

In this regard, we fully agree with recent statements made by the representative of the Holy See during the special session of the General Assembly on social development, to the effect that the benefits of great scientific advances must be shared by all peoples and should not be enjoyed exclusively by the few. Otherwise we will merely be perpetuating differences and widening the gap between rich and poor countries.

We know that decades of development assistance under past conditions have not succeeded very well in eradicating poverty and cultural backwardness in vast regions of the world. Nevertheless, this should not become a pretext for reducing the amount of development assistance, especially multilateral assistance, nor should we see any increase in conditionality. We believe fully in the multilateral approach, and we should totally reject conditionality when determining how to provide development assistance. Nor do we wish to justify the lack of good governance in many nations, which has meant in some cases that efforts were wasted to a great extent and only fuelled corruption and caused the loss of age-old, noble traditional practices.

In the recent elections for the vice-presidency of the Republic, my country demonstrated once again the preference of our region for representative democracy. In the elections, which all observers considered exemplary because of the discipline, civic spirit and participation shown by the citizens, we saw the election of the opposition candidate, of the radical liberal party, Mr. Julio César Franco. The fact that two parties, until now adversaries, can share power is far from negative. Rather, it constitutes an opportunity to establish lasting political stability through the establishment of a Government of national unity that

can efficiently foster the institutional and economic reforms needed in our country in order to achieve sustained progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude — to the international community, to our friends in the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Rio Group, the European Union and the Organization of American States, and to the United States of America, Japan, the Republic of China and other countries around the world — for their constant support for our process of democratization. I would like to say to all of them that thanks to their efforts Paraguay is continuing along the road to democratic growth.

We are certain that the spread of democracy and the increasing exercise of its freedoms by peoples will bring greater effectiveness to our State institutions in the short term. This, together with the increasing role of the private sector, can create fertile ground for investment and the transformation of productive activities in a large part of the world, leading to a reduction in unemployment and poverty.

International cooperation, for its part, must establish clear priorities and offer what each of us needs. It cannot be simply humanitarian aid, although humanitarian aid is fully justified in emergency situations. Instead, international cooperation should be aimed at the integral, sustainable development of peoples. These are two words that are used and misused — “integral” and “sustainable”. When we say “integral”, we understand it to mean that aid must try to come to grips with the entire set of development problems of each country and of each individual, in order to guarantee respect for human rights — not only political rights but also economic and social rights; and merely partial solutions should not be offered.

When we say “sustainable” we mean that assistance must not become an addiction for the beneficiaries. It should empower them to continue along the road to progress relying on their own efforts and should guarantee growth for future generations.

Combating poverty means building peace. The security of the world must be based on the elimination of the underlying causes of violence, two of the principal causes being ignorance and poverty. This does not exempt us, however, from taking effective measures to limit the use of the instruments of violence, from their most deadly form, such as

weapons of mass destruction, to the more conventional, including small arms. In the latter case, my country supports the initiative to establish an international legal instrument with specific measures to check the illegal trade in such weapons.

The preservation of our natural environment is a great source of concern and a subject for reflection. Paraguay, like many other developing countries, gives extremely high priority in its national policies to preserving the integrity and diversity of our natural heritage, handed on by our ancestors. This is not only because on it depends our current and future wealth, but also because we are fully aware of our grave responsibility to all humanity, since we are the guardians of resources needed for its very survival.

Paraguay reaffirms its resolve to continue respecting and implementing the principles established in Agenda 21. In this regard, we attach high priority to the participation of the States parties in the legal framework developed during the implementation phase of the Agenda. With great pride I report that Paraguay is a fully fledged party to the most important international agreements on the environment.

In this area, finally, it is important to mention the need to come to grips with the grave problem of the unsustainable use of water resources. It is necessary to intensify scientific cooperation and research in order to reduce the effects of environmental disasters, both natural and man-made.

We believe that an equitable and fair trade system is vital for our development. In this regard, we reject any intent to perpetuate protectionist measures in the developed countries, particularly subsidies for agricultural production and exports, as well as the use of technical regulations as trade barriers against manufactured products. We claim our right to free access to the world's markets for those goods in which we are competitive.

On this occasion, as we highlight the importance of reaffirming our commitment to this Organization, I believe it is appropriate to stress the essential role that the international legal framework can play in the achievement of our common objectives. In this regard, the Government of Paraguay has paid special attention to the invitation by the Secretary-General to all Member States to take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen our support for the international legal framework by signing, ratifying or acceding to treaties

deposited with him that bear a special relationship to the spirit and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

In this respect, I am very pleased to announce that on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Paraguay I have signed the following international instruments: the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child — on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. I should also note that the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, of which Paraguay was one of the first signatories, is in the process of parliamentary approval.

I conclude by reaffirming the conviction of my country's firm belief in the United Nations, which is more necessary than ever in order to meet the great challenges of peace and development, which, despite significant progress, continue to be an urgent need of a great part of humanity.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Li Hyong Chol, Chairman of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation*): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I should like first of all to congratulate Mr. Harri Holkeri on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I believe that the present session will produce the desired results under his leadership. I pay tribute to his predecessor Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, who made a great contribution to the successful conclusion of the fifty-fourth session. I wish also to express our great appreciation for the efforts made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to strengthen the role of the United Nations.

The central role of the United Nations in the new century should be to establish international relations and order to make the new century independent, peaceful and prosperous. No country can either defend its national dignity or achieve social and economic development when its national sovereignty is violated.

This is the lesson for mankind on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

It is the common aspiration of the world's peoples that the twenty-first century should be a century of independence, peace and development. Genuine peace and prosperity on our planet can be achieved only when the sovereignty of all countries is respected.

We regard independence as our life and soul. The idea of independence runs through all domestic and foreign policies and lines of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This is the brilliant embodiment of the independent policy of the great leader General Kim Jong Il. The reality prevailing on the Korean peninsula clearly testifies to the justness of the independent policies consistently carried out by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Without independence, it is unthinkable that our country could overcome the manifold difficulties and advance the building of a powerful nation convincingly along the road chosen by its people.

The independent foreign policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea makes a tangible contribution to peace and stability in North-East Asia. It can be said that it is entirely because of our firm adherence to independence that our country has been able to play a buffer-zone role effectively in the intersection of the divergent geopolitical interests of several countries. We take pride in the independent foreign policy of our Government, as it contributes to maintaining the balance of power and preventing a war in North-East Asia.

The independent policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also gives full play to its vitality in advancing the cause of peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula. The General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session in 1973 unanimously welcomed the three principles of independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity which had been agreed upon by the north and the south of the Korean peninsula. These three principles of national reunification are the grand programme of reunification put forward by President Kim Il Sung, the great leader of our people, and constitute the most essential component of the three-point charter for national reunification defined by the respected General Kim Jong Il.

At the historic Pyongyang meeting in June this year, the leaders of the North and the South reaffirmed these three principles of national reunification, and on this basis the North-South joint declaration on solving the reunification question independently by the concerted efforts of our nation was made public. The summit meeting and the resulting joint declaration represent a historic milestone, marking a turning-point in achieving the cause of independent reunification of our nation.

Amidst the increased spirit of national independence and reunification, North-South ministerial talks for reconciliation and collaboration are being held and the reunions of separated families realized. Mutual visits between the North and the South through, *inter alia*, direct flights between Pyongyang and Seoul are now commonplace, and a project is underway to re-link the railways between the North and the South of Korea.

This is the brilliant fruition of our independent policy and the result of a warm love for the nation and strong desire for reunification. It is none other than the Korean nation that is responsible for Korea's reunification question. Korea's reunification should be achieved independently by the concerted efforts of the Koreans in the North and the South, as stated in the North-South joint declaration. Reunification will come about if both sides take realistic and practical measures for establishing a reunified State by making the most of common elements of the federation and the confederation proposed by the North and the South respectively.

The independent reunification of our nation will surely lead to a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula, and we believe that this will in turn contribute to peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world.

The turning point created on the Korean peninsula is a positive development of global significance. We consider that the present trend towards the improvement of North-South relations and reunification is a process that should be valued for the sake of peace and security in North-East Asia as well. If this process is to continue to gain momentum, the countries concerned should work in support of the process, rather than disturbing it.

The United States has created our non-existent "missile threat" in order to justify the establishment of its "theatre missile defense" and "national missile

defense" systems. Nevertheless, it gives rise to worldwide concern about its danger.

Our missile programme is of a peaceful nature, for all intents and purposes. All countries have an equal sovereign right, recognized by the United Nations, to conduct research on and make use of the outer space. It is therefore totally unfair for the United States to take issue only with our rockets while many other countries are launching their own space rockets. If hostile relations are removed and confidence is built between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, there will be ways to address the concerns on both sides.

The recent incident that prevented the President of the Presidium of our Supreme People's Assembly from attending the Millennium Summit is, after all, the manifestation of the continued hostile policy pursued by the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in labelling our country a "terrorism-sponsoring nation". In this regard, we note that the United States has recognized its responsibility for the incident and given assurances that such incidents would not occur again. We also note the recently stated United States position that it has no reason to perpetuate its hostile relations with our country. If this position is put into practice, we will be ready to respond in a positive way at any time.

Another factor that casts a shadow on positive development on the Korean peninsula is the suspicious future of Japan. Whether Japan revives its militarist spectre or becomes a peace-loving country is a serious question directly linked to peace and stability in Asia, particularly in its neighbouring Korean peninsula. Continued evasion by Japan on settling its past with our country is the main factor that makes us suspicious of its future orientation. Moreover, such suspicion is increased as we witness Japanese moves to find pretexts for justifying its rearmament by targeting our country as its "enemy".

Should Japan take the path of militarism, it will obviously strain its relations with other Asian countries and exert negative effects on the improvement of North-South relations. We hope Japan will not go in this direction. Japan should find its future in a sincere and early settlement of its past. Now that the North-South joint declaration is being smoothly implemented, new, sound international relations will be established in North-East Asia once the hostile relations between the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan, are resolved.

In conformity with this encouraging process, the United Nations should also take practical measures to dismantle the "United Nations Command", a legacy of the cold war, thus making a due contribution to this process.

In order to establish fair international relations and an international order that will properly represent the new century, it is important to successfully overcome the challenges to the United Nations Charter. The most serious challenge posed in international relations at present is the emergence of the concept of "humanitarian intervention".

The United Nations is based on the principle of sovereign equality. The Charter enshrines the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs as a cornerstone of international relations.

These are the major principles based on the reality in which big and small countries exist in the world. All countries aspire to independence and struggle to defend their national sovereignty. Encroachment upon the sovereignty of small countries by big Powers in exercise of power politics is an act of high-handedness, as already judged by the times. "Humanitarian intervention" is a dangerous concept that could beautify such acts of high-handedness and eliminate the essential spirit of the Charter.

The international relations of the new century should serve to terminate arbitrariness and high-handedness, such as threatening sovereign States by force and imposing sanctions on them, and to fully implement the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. International peace and security should be achieved by strengthening the role of the United Nations, not by arbitrariness, high-handedness and intervention by any individual big Power.

The role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, should be enhanced. Despite an ever-growing desire and expectation by international society for disarmament after the end of the cold war, the disarmament process is at a standstill, faced with new challenges. Reality requires that the nuclear disarmament process be turned into a United Nations process, instead of being left to

the nuclear-weapon States alone. We are of the view that the fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament should be held as early as possible, taking into due consideration the demand of a large number of countries.

Another challenge to be effectively countered by the United Nations in international relations is an attempt to politicize the human rights issue. Along with the use of force, the human rights issue constitutes one of the two factors straining international relations. This is demonstrated in the reality in which United Nations meetings that address human rights issues are often converted into an arena of confrontation, not cooperation. In fact, there is no more grave human rights violation than abusing the human rights issue for political purposes. The United Nations should enhance its role decisively to ensure that fairness is fully observed, and not acquiesce in the application of double standards when dealing with human rights issues.

The twenty-first century should be a century of development. Durable international peace and security are inconceivable without the eradication of poverty and the solution of social and economic problems. A fair international economic order which is conducive to sustainable economic development for the developing countries should be established as early as possible. In particular, it is imperative that the United Nations further the analysis and assessment of the nature and danger of globalization, as well as its impact on the developing countries, and take necessary measures. In this regard, we believe that the Declaration and Action Programme adopted at the South Summit held in Cuba last April can serve as an excellent basis for that purpose.

In order for the United Nations to play a role commensurate with the requirements of the new century, it should be democratized through reform of its structure. The main purpose of United Nations reform is to ensure democracy and strict observance of the principles of justice and fairness in all its activities.

The General Assembly has now been relatively democratized, but it does not have sufficient authority. In contrast, the Security Council has authority and action capability but falls short of the desired degree of democracy. In particular, the present structure of the Security Council leaves a vacuum which allows the United Nations to be used as a tool of high-handedness,

for the Council monopolizes decision-making power on such critical issues as enforcement action, including the use of force. The twentieth century witnessed such cases on several occasions.

We hold that the enhancement of the authority of the General Assembly is a prerequisite for ensuring democracy in United Nations activities. The Assembly must be empowered at least to review the issues of international peace and security and to approve major decisions and resolutions of the Security Council on these issues.

In reforming the Security Council, priority should be given to increasing the number of non-permanent seats, thus correcting the present imbalance in regional representation. It is also imperative that effective ways be sought to ensure strict observance of the principles of justice and fairness in United Nations activities.

We consider that one means to this end will be to restore the confidence of the international community in the United Nations by redressing those issues mishandled in the past by the United Nations, in contradiction to the purposes and principles of its Charter, by force of arbitrariness and high-handedness.

Independence, peace and friendship are the fundamental ideas of the foreign policy of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic will remain true to this idea and faithfully discharge its obligations as a Member State of the United Nations, so that the United Nations can become a truly effective organization that creditably serves the aspirations and requirements of the new century.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Bartoszewski (Poland) (*spoke in Polish; English text furnished by the delegation*): Allow me first of all to congratulate Mr. Harri Holkeri on his election as President of the Millennium session of the General Assembly. The Polish delegation expresses its satisfaction that the presidency of this session has been entrusted to an eminent statesman from Finland, a country with which we have ties of friendship and cooperation based on common values and aspirations. He may count on my delegation's full cooperation in the performance of his important tasks.

My congratulations also to the Assembly's outgoing President, Minister Theo-Ben Guribab, for the outstanding commitment and skill he displayed during his presidency.

On behalf of Poland, allow me also to welcome to the United Nations the new Member, Tuvalu.

I should also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the outstanding manner in which he has demonstrated his qualities of leadership and good judgement, and in particular for his inspirational report, "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century".

Although the start of the new millennium is still a few months away, a new era actually began a little earlier. It was marked by the demise of the world's ideological polarization into East and West and division into three worlds, and by the emergence of the world economy. Humankind enters this new era, the age of globalization, with the immense opportunity to expand the spheres of freedom and prosperity brought by the triumph of democracy and advances in technology, especially the achievements of the information revolution.

Behind us we have left the twentieth century, an age of extremes and profound contradictions. It was an age of man's triumphs and downfalls, alternating setbacks and advances in the evolution of the international community. On the one hand, we have witnessed of amazing scientific, technological and material progress, the spread of human rights and democracy and the development of universal international institutions. On the other hand, it was also an age of the most horrendous dramas in contemporary human history, of the tragedies, atrocities and devastation of two world wars, of the utmost contempt for the human being, and of genocide and blind violence perpetrated by utopias intent on thus building "brave new worlds". The Polish poet and Nobel laureate in literature in 1980, Czeslaw Milosz, wrote in *The Witness of History* that the twentieth century's original contribution to the history of the human race was "the near disappearance of the concept of values" and concluded: "The extermination camp became the central fact of the century."

Nonetheless, the end of this century seems to bring more optimism. This is not only the assessment of the Foreign Minister of reborn and democratic

Poland. It is also the personal feeling of a man who, having been a prisoner of two totalitarian systems, the Nazi and the Communist — incidentally, I am, I think, the only Foreign Minister to hold this "distinction" — has known the sufferings specific to this century, and it reflects the hope ingrained in human nature. But as well as destruction and hatred, I have also been, since as long ago as the days of the Holocaust, a witness of and participant in a struggle for the dignity and the rights of the human being and the process of my country's recovery of independence and arduous construction of democracy.

My history of active participation in transforming the conditions of human existence, in its individual and collective dimension, began in the yard of the concentration camp of Auschwitz. Later, enlistment in the Polish resistance and, in particular, participation in assistance for the inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto. Next, the unimaginable inferno of the Warsaw uprising in 1944 and the death, as it seemed at the time, of Warsaw. Finally, the end of the war. I remember the joy and hope with which we greeted the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They gave me strength when I found myself having to survive the ordeal of years in Communist jails. From them, too, I drew inspiration on the journey that eventually led me and my political friends to Gdansk, the city for which our allies were unwilling to die in 1939 and in which the next great turning-point in the history of the past century was launched in 1980.

Indeed, two weeks ago we celebrated in Poland the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the Solidarity movement, the Polish revolution that was at first suppressed at gunpoint by the totalitarian regime but that, becoming an emblem of hope, weathered repression and an unfavourable set of international circumstances. The rebirth of Solidarity in 1989 and the Polish Round Table opened the way to historic changes, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Communist bloc, and in consequence set in motion a sweeping transformation of the international system. Having been involved for over 60 years in these processes, as a writer, historian, university lecturer and, currently, Foreign Minister, I feel — if the Assembly will forgive the personal tone of this confession — as if I were a living, physical symbol of humanity's stormy voyage through the history of the past century.

But let me also say that the traumatic experiences of my nation have made the Poles exceptionally aware of the value of peace and any manifestations of good that are lastingly present in international life. Making our contribution to the positive culmination of the twentieth century and working towards the revitalization of the message of the United Nations, and thereby opening up new prospects for the Organization, we see ourselves as full and active members of the global family of nations. A further source of the sense of security and confidence that fortifies us in this role within the United Nations is that we have become a member of the North Atlantic Alliance and are forging ever-closer ties with the European Union, which we expect to join in the near future.

Bolstered by our accomplishments in the past decade, having reclaimed our place on the international stage, we are eager to participate together with other nations in this generally perceptible shift towards values. A yearning for a world imbued with moral values is visible in all civilizations and religions. This is especially evident in the waning of the unlawful use of force in international life. The recent outbreaks seen here and there are an echo of divisions and conflicts that are fading along with the twentieth century. This positive tendency can be observed in Europe, in the Middle East, in North-East Asia and in other parts of the world. Contributing to it is a growing respect for human rights and appreciation of the economic and social factors involved in their full achievement.

Against this background, the Polish people hold in great esteem the peace mission of John Paul II, the Pope from Poland — a Pope whose pontificate, like the whole course of his life, personifies, beacon-like, an unwavering adherence to values and, through the symbol of open arms, understanding and reconciliation. The Pope's position not only fills us with pride but is also a model for our international behaviour. The bearings guiding our actions, including here in the United Nations, are tolerance, openness and respect for the dignity and rights of the individual, minorities and whole nations. We are determined to oppose every kind of discrimination and prejudice, whether on ethnic, national, religious or social grounds. In this cause, Poland is and will continue to be a staunch ally of the United Nations.

We are entering the twenty-first century with the immense potential generated by the newest phase of the

revolution in science, technology, mass communications, the opening up of frontiers, the development of inter-societal ties and the universalization of democracy and human rights. Most of these phenomena are encompassed by the common term "globalization". For a number of years, assessment of their consequences has, especially in the wake of regional financial crises, been growing increasingly contentious. Sometimes they are treated as a force of nature sweeping all before them, as morally neutral processes that can do good or harm and that eventually will bring prosperity to all peoples or be a source of crises, inequality and instability within nations and on an international scale.

Globalization has unquestionably beneficial effects in the sphere of trade, production, the spread of modern technologies and capital flows. The liberalization of international trade, the growth of world output and the prosperity of societies should bring a more equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization. At the same time, there are looming dangers, harmful side-effects and new problems whose scale and nature we are not yet capable of identifying correctly. The challenge facing us is to work together to steer these processes in such a way that it is their blessings that are mainly felt by humanity, and that they are prevented from creating new divides in the world. We must do everything in our power, including here at the United Nations, to ensure that these processes mean the globalization of good.

Faced with the opportunities, but also the threats, presented by the evolution of human civilization at the threshold of the third millennium, the international community needs to organize around a question of basic importance to the direction of its future development. That was the purpose of the Government of Poland when it decided, together with the Governments of Chile, India, the Republic of Korea, Mali, the United States and the Czech Republic, to initiate broader international collaboration in the cause of consolidation and promotion of democracy in the world.

In this gathering there is no need to argue the virtues of democracy. No one disputes the positive interrelationship between democracy and human rights, internal and international peace, economic growth and prosperity and better realization of the principles of justice and solidarity. At the same time, we cannot ignore the threats to democracy, which are primarily of

an internal nature. They affect countries in the process of democratic transition as well as so-called mature democracies. They cover a wide spectrum, ranging from poverty and economic underdevelopment, ethnic conflicts and organized crime to corruption and the exclusion of whole sectors of public life, notably finance and the media, from democratic control, which saps the foundations of democracy and demeans it in the eyes of society. Democracy, its condition and prospects, can and should be no less a legitimate subject of international debate and cooperation than the other great issues of our times: human rights, disarmament, the environment and the like.

Imbued with this belief, we embarked, in conjunction with a number of other States, on organizing in June of this year an international conference, "Towards a Community of Democracies". A total of 107 States accepted our invitation. Speaking at the Warsaw conference, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said,

"One of the greatest challenges to humankind in the new century will be the struggle to make the practice of democracy equally universal. In that struggle, nations in which democracy is already well established will need to be vigilant in preserving that achievement".

The participants in the conference adopted the Warsaw Declaration, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to its catalogue of democratic values and standards. They also undertook to pursue informal cooperation to strengthen and promote democracy in various international organizations. For obvious reasons, the key question will be what can be done to advance this cause in the framework of and through the United Nations.

Let me take this opportunity to recall another Polish initiative that also falls within the current of responses to the harmful side effects of globalization processes. In 1996, at the General Assembly, Poland submitted a proposal to frame a universal legal instrument, the first of its kind, that could help us combat one of the greatest dangers of our times: international organized crime. At this session the text of that Convention will be presented to the General Assembly for its approval.

The central issue of successive international agendas is security. Though preserving international

peace and security is the main purpose of the United Nations, States have also looked to other ways to ensure their security: through creation of balance-of-power systems, arms races and even the use of force. Today we are trying to achieve such goals by different means. Anachronistic doctrines of geopolitics and spheres of influence are now fading into history. The Roman maxim, "If you want peace, prepare for war" — *Si vis pacem para bellum* — is becoming irrelevant. Nevertheless, the problem of security remains a pressing one, as the numerous conflicts and humanitarian dramas in various parts of the world make all too clear. In addition to crises and wars inherited from the old international order, we are plagued by conflicts which spring from poverty, ethnic and religious strife or the atrophying of States' ability to perform their basic functions: providing the people living within their borders with internal security and decent conditions of existence.

This new situation, in which security depends not so much on purely military factors as on social stability, on observance of human rights and the rights of national minorities or on access to drinking water, enhances the role of the United Nations, which can draw on unique experience and a wide range of non-military instruments for ensuring security. Fuller involvement by the United Nations in the security sphere as provided in the mandate deriving from its Charter requires determined continuation of reform of the Organization in this field, starting with a practical redefinition of the role of the Security Council that would extend its purview to non-traditional threats to international security.

The Security Council must do what, in accordance with the Charter, is expected of it by Members and respond more decisively to signs of budding conflicts or humanitarian disasters. The Kosovo drama, like many others, could have been avoided if Security Council members had displayed sufficient imagination and resolve at the right time. That would also have enabled us to avoid last year's arguments and controversies over the issue of humanitarian intervention. The inability of the Security Council to respond robustly in such situations will open the way to further precedents for sidestepping the Charter and United Nations mechanisms in the security sphere and could thereby lead to disintegration of this system.

The success and effectiveness of the proposals and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's Millennium report will depend on the determination of the Security Council as the system's lynch-pin. Poland endorses the report's perspective on international problems and approach to tackling them. We are in favour of stronger legal instruments for stabilizing the international order; this refers to situations involving threats to security and use of force, to respect for human rights and to arms control and limitation. In all these areas we must preserve the primacy of the United Nations system over regional or unilateral measures, which are acceptable only in the exceptional circumstances in which the Security Council and United Nations mechanisms are found wanting.

In this context I should also like to pay tribute to the Brahimi report on United Nations peace operations. As a long-standing and very active participant in United Nations peacekeeping missions, Poland is in favour of streamlining the machinery for conducting them — from decision-making to presence in the field — and ensuring their greater effectiveness by widening and making more adequate the array of instruments with which such operations are equipped. This means both the possibility of the use of force by the units deployed in an operation and a wide spectrum of peace-building and post-conflict rehabilitation capabilities. I refer also to action aimed at advancing human rights and laying the groundwork for democracy in the institutional and civil society sphere. In our view, in further work on the recommendations of the report, greater emphasis should be put on the question of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, an area in which lie many hitherto untapped opportunities, as well on as a more creative approach to conflict prevention.

We no longer seek foundations for a future international order in military capacities, but to an ever greater degree we are trying to build it on fair and respected laws. The maxim *Si vis pacem para iustitiam* which adorns the facade of the Palace of Justice in The Hague no longer has quite the idealistic ring that it had several decades ago. But we are also aware that though administering justice through law is an indispensable condition of peace, it is not yet a sufficient condition. Our times, in which conflicts and instability are often a result of poverty and underdevelopment, require the application of a new maxim, a contemporary

paraphrase of the old ones: *Si vis pacem para solidaritatem*.

Here, we are entering the domain of the international economic order, in particular its financial and trade dimensions. This is a sphere in which the United Nations system must be much more active than hitherto or run the risk of being sidelined by the new and powerful non-State actors in international life. The recently fashionable, if ill-defined, formula of global governance should at the practical level be developed in the United Nations framework or in concert with, not parallel or counter to, the United Nations. First and foremost, it is essential to intensify international efforts to promote stability and predictability in international economic relations, which includes strengthening the new international financial architecture of a system and institutions based on transparent rules.

What is also needed — and this is a point that clearly emerges from the reports of the main international organizations, the Secretary-General's report included — is a new approach to development. One has to agree with those who maintain that there is no greater challenge today than global sustainable development and that United Nations success or failure will be crucial to the outcome of efforts by the international community.

One of the key challenges facing the international community as it enters the twenty-first century is poverty reduction, especially in the least developed countries. Success in this field requires wide application of the principle of solidarity in international economic relations. If globalization is to be harnessed to development and poverty reduction, more is needed than just better coordination among the organizations active in the socio-economic sphere. It is also necessary to stop perceiving development and poverty reduction solely as technical problems. To attack them effectively, there has to be a coherent policy that comprises not only financial and technical assistance but also substantive measures in the sphere of education, culture, good governance, rule of law, democratic institutions, etc.

International solidarity will not deliver results in the shape of building up the production capacities of the poorest countries and enabling them to reap benefits from globalization processes without serious efforts on the part of these countries themselves, in

particular rational economic policies and the ability to make effective use of development aid.

Poland is joining in international endeavours to further effective management of international interdependence, with an appropriate role played by the United Nations system and a key role by international financial institutions in the organization of international economic and financial cooperation. In the framework of a poverty reduction strategy, we are participating in the implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Poland also supports the European Union proposal that World Trade Organization (WTO) members, including in the first place the industrialized countries, should within a year of the conclusion of a new trade round abolish import tariffs and quotas on basically all exports from the least developed countries.

It is precisely in order to stress what we believe to be the crucial significance of solidarity in maintaining peace, security and solidarity throughout the world that the Polish Government, mindful of the experiences of our recent history, will — together with a few other countries — propose that the United Nations proclaim 31 August as "International Solidarity Day", it is the date of the establishment of the free and independent Solidarity trade union in Poland in 1980.

The qualitatively new feature of the situation at the turn of the century is not only the extent but the greater complexity of the tasks facing our Organization. Greater still are the expectations associated with it of individuals, diverse groups, nations and the whole international community. It is essential that we not only understand the nature of the new problems but also deal more effectively with the matters that have to be tackled by the United Nations, whether or not they form an explicit part of the mandate deriving from the Charter. In roles ranging from preserving peace to human rights, and from development to protection of the natural environment, the United Nations is irreplaceable. It is precisely because of the nature of threats such as environmental degradation in the contemporary world that a speedy and comprehensive response by the United Nations is needed. The sense of "one earth, one human race" requires solidarity-driven and responsible action by all the system's participants.

The tasks and expectations associated with the United Nations require that its role in international relations be strengthened. The system must continue to be the legal and institutional infrastructure of the international order. No other formula provides sufficient legitimization for the performance of this role. The United Nations Charter and Organization are indispensable, in the first place, to small and medium-sized countries. Marginalization of the United Nations would lead to anarchy, in which the only law would be the will of the great Powers and increasingly powerful non-State actors.

The extremely positive trends towards involvement of non-governmental organizations in United Nations activities — a trend steadfastly championed by Poland — must remain consonant with the intergovernmental character of the Organization, whose universal mandate stems from the legitimacy of the States which are its Members. Within this system we must, however, be mindful not only of the rights of States but also of their obligations.

Accountability does not apply only to individuals, though here we are in favour of prompt entry into force of the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court. We cannot allow the United Nations to tolerate a situation of non-accountability of States for violations of international law.

The successes of any organization, its usefulness and effectiveness, are not only a matter of the determination and unanimity of its members. Much also depends on the resources at its disposal, the efficiency of its procedures and the competence of the people operating them. In the past, United Nations officers have provided innumerable examples of their dedication in pursuing the Organization's activities, of their commitment to serving the ideals actuating the United Nations. Better use needs to be made of their potential through constant adaptation of the Organization's structures and mechanisms to changing tasks. That will also make for much better disposition of the Organization's budget.

In our drive to rationalize the United Nations budget, our focus should not be on ways of reducing it. The real problem is that there is not enough money to do all the things that everyone expects the Organization to be doing. The United Nations budget should be tailored to the tasks that we ask it to perform, but also more effectively. We are also aware that the

Organization's regular budget and its peacekeeping budget should be based on the principle of the ability to pay and on realistic economic indicators. Poland is prepared to accept any reasonable and fair changes that may be agreed on the future scale of contributions. We will play a constructive part in negotiations on this problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in right of reply.

May I remind members that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Shakerian (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation rejects the claim raised today by the delegation of United Arab Emirates against the territorial integrity of my country and would point out that such assertions are unacceptable. Since our position on the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf is very clear, I need not go into specifics. I should merely like to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been and continues to be prepared to discuss the issue in good faith with the authorities of the United Arab Emirates. We remain hopeful that officials

of the Emirates will respond positively to our call for discussions on the basis of the 1971 Understanding.

Mr. Al Hassan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should be pleased if our neighbours and brothers in Iran would translate their words into action, beginning tomorrow. But it is regrettable that the appeal of Iran for dialogue among civilizations which was announced by President Khatami and which we considered a good omen has since more than one year not been translated into practice between Iran and the Emirates.

The United Arab Emirates launched an appeal more than 10 years ago, asking that an agreement be reached between Iran and ourselves in a serious and creative action. Regrettably, however, as the General Assembly heard this morning from the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Iran has so far not even responded to the appeal made by the tripartite committee formed by the Gulf Cooperation Council to establish the machinery for a dialogue between Iran and the Emirates. Iran has so far not allowed this committee to visit Iran. I should like the words of the representative of Iran to be translated into action. We will be happy to respond.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.